

## BRIEFS

### LIFEWAY CLOSES PROPERTY SALE

NASHVILLE (BP) — LifeWay has completed the sale of its 14.5-acre campus in downtown Nashville where the publishing house of the nation's largest Protestant denomination got its start nearly 125 years ago. The sale's closing was announced in a joint news release from LifeWay and purchaser Southwest Value Partners, a private real estate investment firm based in San Diego. A sale price of \$125 million cash was stated by an attorney for Southwest Value Partners to The Tennessean daily newspaper in Nashville, but a price has not been announced by LifeWay.

### MINISTER TO MUSLIMS DIES IN TENNESSEE

MURFREESBORO, TN. (BP) — Raouf W. Ghattas, 69, a Baptist pastor known for his pioneering work in reaching Muslims with the Gospel, died Nov. 25 of an apparent heart attack at his home in Murfreesboro, TN. Ghattas, pastor of Arabic Church in Murfreesboro, was noted for his desire to educate others about Islamic culture and sharing the Gospel with Muslims. Raouf and his wife Carol served together as church planters and evangelists with the International Mission Board from 1991-2011, living in Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Egypt.

### PRISON CHURCH GAINS ADMISSION

ANGOLA, La. (BP) — In what may be a groundbreaking move for Southern Baptists, a Louisiana Baptist association has accepted a prison church into its fellowship. Washington Association in Franklinton now counts among its members Grace Church of the Main Camp in Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola. "To our knowledge this is the very first, fully recognized Southern Baptist church... located inside a penitentiary," said Andrew Voss, pastor of Hillcrest Church in Franklinton and a New Orleans Seminary adjunct professor. "The vote was unanimous and there was an overwhelming eruption of applause after the vote was taken."

## LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING

# Gifts help train workers, save souls

**SOUTH ASIA (BP)** — The outreach of former Mississippians Donald and Helen McKinney (not their real names) to South Asians started in North America. They first got to know a South Asian people group in their church's backyard in New York state, before becoming Christian workers on the other side of the world.

Helen and her Sunday School teacher from Trinity Church in Niskayuna, N.Y., began visiting the homes of the church's neighbors, several of whom were from South Asia. Each Thursday over tea, they formed friendships with the families, who showed them photos of family members in South Asia.

"The ladies would so welcome us, they were so lonely for their family," Helen recalled. The Thursday home visits turned into a weekly Bible study when they also swapped recipes and played with the children. A former school teacher, Helen gravitated to interacting with the children.

Over the next 10 years, the Thursday class drew about 50 women each week.

"That really started in my heart a love for these people," Helen said of the South Asian people group she has served among. "They're so precious, so open to hearing the truth of God's Word."

Donald was invited on a missions trip to South Asia while he was a professor and dean at Mid-America Seminary's Northeast Campus in Albany, N.Y. Year after year, the McKinneys spent their summers in South Asia where Donald taught theology, outreach, and leadership development to pastors who had started house churches in South Asia but had little access to pastoral training.

### 'Ocean of Idolatry'

Most of the pastors were raised Hindu, which purports that "gods are in everything: nature, trees — not trees representing gods but that the trees are gods," Donald said. "They have a god for this and a god for that — one for prosperity, another for health, etc."

After deciding to devote his time to church leader development there, Donald said, "I was initially overwhelmed by this ocean of idolatry."

### 2015 LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS • NOV. 29 - DEC. 6



## BECAUSE OF WHO HE IS

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He visited Hindu temples to see how people worshipped, observing people offering food, flowers and incense to statues and praying to them. One evening, he saw a celebratory procession of a new statue being added to a temple. Devotees carried the flower-draped statue on their shoulders as they circled the temple, crying out, "God is coming! God is coming!"

Another night, Donald struck up a conversation with an electrical salesman praying at the temple. "He told me he worships 40 gods a night, and Jesus is one of them," Donald recounted. "I told him that wasn't good enough. Jesus needs to be the only one."

There are 1.6 billion people living in this part of the world, and it has "the greatest concentration of lostness," Donald said. There are more unengaged, unreached people groups in South Asia than in the rest of the world combined.

### Absorbing the Gospel

One of the most rewarding yet humbling aspects of sharing the Gospel in an unreached area is being the first one to tell someone, he said. When looking at someone absorbing the words of the Gospel for the first

see LOTTIE on p. 6

**GOSPEL GROWS** — At a small rural church in South Asia, local pastors conduct a baptism watched by the wives of the two men being baptized. The baptisms are the fruit of Southern Baptists' efforts to reach across the world with the Good News through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. (BP photo)

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## From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

### A symbol of our own

Symbols are powerful objects to people, and always have been. From the beginnings of human history, when people piled stones one upon the other to mark significant places and events, to the Colossus of Rhodes, to the World Trade Towers, symbols compel us to remember the past, move us to action in the present, and give us hope for the future.

Great movements have almost always included important symbols. Who can forget Lady Liberty in Tiananmen Square, or our own Statue of Liberty on which Lady Liberty was based? The Great Seal of the United States, with its bald eagle clutching among its talons both arrows for war and olive branches for peace, is recognized all over the world. (A trivia question: In which direction does the eagle's head face? Answer: To the right toward the olive branches, to symbolize the nation's preference for peace.)

Symbols have of course been misused through the ages, too. The swastika, for over 3,000 years the symbol of good luck in many cultures around the world, was adopted by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party in the 1930s to capture the essence of their ruinous march toward war and mass murder. It has never recovered its original meaning.

Christians have their symbols, too, the most consequential being the cross upon which our Lord and Savior died to save each one of us. Scholars and other folks have argued for many years (and continue to do so) over the exact composition and configuration of the cross, but its influence and meaning to billions of people over the past 2,000 years is not arguable.

If Southern Baptists have a symbol to call our own, it would be the image of Lottie Moon and the ideals she embodied. One of the first Southern Baptist missionaries to be commissioned to China in 1873, her passion for helping bring lost souls to salvation in that country is legendary even to non-Southern Baptist Christians.

Lottie lived among the Chinese people for 40 years. She was known far and wide, by both friend and foe alike, as the Heavenly Book Visitor because of her unshakable faith in and firm reliance upon the Bible. She loved the Chinese people with all her heart — especially the women and children.

She loved them so much that, when the time came, she was willing to lay down her life for them. Famine came to China, and she was so committed to the people that she gave away all her money and food so others could eat. Finally, on a ship in the harbor of Kobe, Japan, that was returning her to America, she died of malnutrition on Christmas Eve of 1912. She weighed 50 pounds.



The world little noted her life and passing, but Southern Baptists have never forgotten her. Her spiritual passion and personal sacrifice for the cause of Christ has come to symbolize our dedication to helping fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). Her selflessness epitomizes for us the image of Christ in ourselves, and calls us to be as single-minded as Lottie when

it comes to the prospect of helping to bring the world to Jesus.

It is fitting that Lottie Moon has become such a powerful symbol for Southern Baptists. She dedicated her life to others and eventually died for them. How much closer to the model of Jesus could any one of us get?

As the December emphasis for this year's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions is upon us and we all seek the Lord's guidance on the amount we will give, know that every penny of the offering goes directly to the field to support the Southern Baptists who are there, just as Lottie was there all those many years ago. Let us hold high the symbol of Lottie not only as we give of our resources, but as we also give of our lives to help save the world.

Most importantly, let us hold Jesus Christ highest of all. Lottie wouldn't want it any other way.

## Gratefulness and health

Don't you love it when science and medicine catch up with the Bible? Health- and exercise-conscious people have been saying for years there is a connection between a healthy body and a healthy spirit. Now there is clinical proof alongside the Bible's affirmation of people who give thanks and praise to God.

Psalms 103:1-5 says: "Praise the LORD, O my soul; / all my inmost being, praise his holy name. / Praise the LORD, O my soul, / and forget not all his benefits — / who forgives all your sins / and heals all your diseases, / who redeems your life from the pit / and crowns you with love and compassion, / who satisfies your desires with good things / so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's" (NIV).

I have been meditating on this psalm in recent weeks. What sparked my interest is the phrase from verse two, "praise the Lord O my soul, and forget not all his benefits," and the connection to verse five, "who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."

A number of studies in recent years have shown how gratefulness indeed can enhance your health in a variety of ways. The peer-reviewed *Heart International* journal published a study revealing that heart patients who had a positive and thankful outlook on life had much better results than those who did not. The study suggested that grateful people tend to make more money, sleep better, adhere to exercise commitments, and are less likely to get infections.

Another fascinating study, in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Happiness Studies*, said this is also true for children and adolescents. The study surveyed 1,035 high-school students and found that teenagers who were most thankful had more friends and higher GPAs. Just the opposite was true of those showing materialistic values. They had lower grades, less satisfaction with their lives, and higher levels of envy and jealousy. Wow — a really good reason to get your kids to tell you before they get out of the car at least one thing for which they are grateful.

For me personally, an attitude of gratitude is something I have to practice daily. We know we should take time and thank God for His many blessings and "forget not." The catch is I don't think gratefulness comes naturally. We have to train ourselves to be thankful. Here are a few disciplines encouraged by the First Place 4 Health wellness ministry of which I'm a part:

■ **Write it down.** Listing the things for which we are grateful will help us remember



**Guest opinion**  
with Vicki Heath

to be thankful. We tend to forget His benefits and blessings. Just the very act of putting pen to paper does something to cement the act of thanksgiving in my heart. Keeping a journal may be what you need to boost your health and lower your blood pressure.

■ **Use your words.** I stopped a stranger in the restaurant the other day wearing a "Vietnam Veteran" hat. My dad served two terms in Vietnam and did not receive much of a thank-you when he returned. I took time and thanked this gentleman for his service to our country. I could tell it surprised and blessed him. It did not take much effort on my part.

Don't let grateful thoughts go unspoken for another minute. Call that friend. Write that letter or card you have been putting off. Words have the power to bring hope but have to use them.

■ **Choose gratefulness.** We have more control over our thoughts than many of us realize. Even in the hardest times we can find a reason to be grateful. Being grateful is a decision you make, not necessarily something you might feel. I have a longtime pastor's wife friend who is always smiling. Someone asked her once, "Why are you always smiling?" Her answer? "Because I decided to."

■ **Pray.** The Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, "Give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (NIV). It certainly is not easy to give thanks in the midst of hard times but the more we practice giving thanks in the good times, it will certainly come quicker in the hard times.

I want to express genuine gratitude to our Lord. The health benefits are just a bonus! Proverbs 17:22 is true, "A cheerful heart is good medicine..." (NLT).

Heath is the national director of First Place 4 Health, a wellness program for balance in spirit, soul, mind, and body based on a giving Christ first place, based in Houston, Texas.

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# Water worker grateful for Miss. church's support

**CENTRAL ASIA (BP)** — Christian aid worker Gary Warrior (not his real name) was sitting on the floor in a Central Asian village with a congregation of about 20 people several years ago, getting ready to share about "the cost of discipleship."

Someone made the suggestion to go around the room and share their testimonies. One woman simply said, "Oh, I'm just very blessed and I'm so thankful to be here." Her friend elbowed her and said, "Explain to him your testimony, tell him what's happening in your life with God."

The woman again said she was "blessed" and just thankful to sing songs and read the Bible together. "You tell him the truth," her friend retorted. "You tell him that every night after you go to these meetings, your husband beats you and last week he beat you with a hammer."

Tears jumped to Warrior's eyes as he thought, "How can I tell these people to go out there and suffer for Christ's sake?" God just grabbed me by the collar and He said, "You're not asking them, I am."

## People of Grief

This former Soviet republic was suffering, broken, and poor after a five-year civil war when Gary arrived in 1997 with his wife Ann (not her real name) and their four children, two of whom are now adults. Though the Soviets tried to stamp out religion, the country did not lose its strong Muslim identity.

Many of these Central Asians feel hopeless and overlooked by the world. "[To] show up here now, in this point in history, and begin to tell them that God loves them — this is water on dry ground," Warrior says.

Despite the people's thirst for truth and love Christians are persecuted, not necessarily from the communist government — Warrior estimates about 30 government-registered churches and 1,000 believers in the country — but from society. Leaving Islam brings great shame on a person's family.

"Persecution comes every time the Gospel is proclaimed here," Warrior says, "but if we're able to do it in the context of families and in communities, we can minimize the effects of that persecution so that people can stand together for the cause of Christ and not be chased out."

## Focus Changed

Warrior was pastor of First Southern Church of Grandview, W.Va., before being sent out by the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists and the Mountain State Association. They are now part of Park Hill Church of North Little Rock, Ar.



**▲ LIFE-GIVING WATER** — A South Asian woman divides precious fresh water into individual containers for the long walk home from the central location where the water is available. (BP photo)

**► WATER ON THE WAY** — Youth in a Central Asian country chip in to tug one of their friends from a water well where he has been digging to provide their village with fresh water, harkening to the Living Water that is communicated in each such project because of Southern Baptists' giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and the Cooperative Program. (BP photo)

Warrior wasn't planning to focus on human needs work, having earned a music degree and an M.Div. from Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth, but after seeing that even numerous aid agencies couldn't respond to the great number of disasters and people suffering in Central Asia, Warrior started a disaster response team of Christian workers and national believers in 1998.

He discovered that disaster response "gave us real access to share the Gospel" by being with people in crisis. The next year in that village, Warrior's team planted their first church and baptized 13 people.

To extend the Gospel's reach, Warrior's team dubs Christian movies into local languages and gives them to people they encounter. They have dubbed 12 films — including *The Gospel of John*; *Esther*; and *Courageous* — and created worship songs for their Central Asian context.



"This is the Gospel presented in the local language in a way that I can't speak it," Warrior says. "It's visually powerful."

## The transition

After Warrior's team responded to disasters for 10 years, the country's government became better able to respond which left him wondering, "What next?" The team visited a Christian friend, Murod (not his real name), during one of their last disaster responses. He craved Christian fellowship since he had not seen another believer for two and a half years.

The team wanted to support Murod's witness, and they learned that the village desperately needed clean water. People were constantly sick with diseases like typhoid, hepatitis A, and giardia from drinking dirty water in polluted irrigation canals and streams — the

only water sources to which many have access.

One villager told Warrior that his wife was discouraged, having given birth to three babies in the past three years who had died. "If we can get them clean drinking water," Warrior says, "we can change everything for them."

With the help and training of a relief organization, Warrior's team of Christian workers and national believers transitioned to digging wells in 2009. It has been satisfying to "have the opportunity to make the connection between clean drinking water and the Water of Life," he says.

Putting a well in Murod's village was difficult — they had to dig 30 holes to find water — but today, there are nine wells. All that time spent digging provided many witnessing opportunities in the village.

Now, a small church meets at Murod's house. Warrior's team

is encouraged by the continual strength and joy of Murod and his wife Muhabbat (not her real name) despite the persecution and ridicule they receive from their village.

## Giving, Supporting

Warrior is thankful for the U.S. churches like Morrison Heights Church in Clinton that partner with his team to provide support and volunteer teams. "There are people who are followers of Jesus today who wouldn't have been without those volunteers coming," he says.

Warrior also is grateful that faithful givers to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and Cooperative Program have "stuck with him" during his 17 years overseas. Although Warrior's team has made about 2,000 Gospel presentations every year for the past three years, it takes a long time for someone to become a Christian.

These are exciting times, he says. "I'm seeing people who are coming to faith in Christ. Not every day, but it's happening."

Warrior and his team have planted five house churches that still meet today and have distributed more than 6,000 Gospel DVDs in the past two years. With the assistance of Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and Cooperative Program funding, the well-digging team installed 19 wells and provided clean drinking water for about 10,000 people last year.

"God has done that because we've been faithful, and the peoples in the pews back in America have been faithful to keep giving and to keep sending... and the result is there's a church here and there wasn't when I came," Warrior says.

## Prayer Needs

For Warrior and many other workers like him who have answered Christ's Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20), pray for:

- more opportunities to share the Gospel, and for the country's key leaders to embrace the truth of the Gospel of Christ.

- protection on the team of Christian workers and national believers, and that they would keep loving, respecting, and supporting each other.

- the Warrior family as they are separated by distance. Their four children live in four different countries. Only their youngest is at home with them.

Find resources for churches at [imb.org](http://imb.org) to learn more about and promote the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. For a related video titled, *Central Asia: The Gospel is Proclaimed Here*, visit [vimeo.com/139492275](http://vimeo.com/139492275).

The parents named their new baby girl Charlotte Diggs Moon. As she grew up her family and friends didn't call her Charlotte or Diggs or Moonie, but she simply became Lottie. Lottie Moon. She seemed to be a free-spirited young lady who was not overly serious about life or her studies. I'm sure if we could interview some of her friends from those early days or maybe talk with some of her teachers, we would discover that many, if not all, were shocked when she became a missionary. A missionary headed to the great country of China.

Even now for those of us who did not know her, we're amazed that for over four decades she loved and taught and cared for the people of China and brought so many of them to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. She did not die in China but was on her way home from China when her life concluded at Kobe, Japan. The truth is that she had left her life, given her all in serving Jesus in China.

While she lived, worked, and ministered in China, her heart also reached out to Baptists across the South and across the land pleading with them, encouraging them, cajoling them to give so that the great work of reaching China for Jesus could be carried out. She was not just a missionary in name, but a missionary in commitment and inspiration and passion to follow Jesus and His will for her life. She was an inspiration to thousands



## Lottie

and thousands and had become not just an iconic mission figure but an inspiration to millions who themselves have heard a call from God to go and others who, because of Lottie, have had a personal call to make sure that others can go.

So the greatest mission gift in the entire world has come to bear her name, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. This year the mission giving goal of Southern Baptists is \$175,000,000, but many of you know because of the shortfalls in giving both to the Cooperative Program and to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, hundreds of missionaries are having to come home due to the lack of funding.

During her life, Lottie would often write home to ladies in the churches asking them to encourage the church to give so that others could join in the missionary work. She would write to pastors and leaders pleading with them to help. She repeatedly turned down opportunities to come home simply because there was no one to take her place and she would not leave a vacant gap in the mission work. Though she has long since gone on to be with the Lord, it could be said of her today that she being dead yet speaketh.

Because of the downturn in the economy and more and more churches giving less through the Cooperative Program, and for many not giving to

the mission effort through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, hundreds of our missionaries are having to be brought back to their home base. Many who were hoping to stay on the field and stay in place serving the Lord and reaching people for Jesus have had to face the awkward decision of taking early retirement and coming back home.

I think if Lottie could speak to Southern Baptists today she would give an impassioned plea to do more than you've ever done, to pray and ask God to help you understand what He wants you to do in supporting the mission of Christ around the world. It is not time for us to stop, drop, or run. It's time for us to step up and say, "Lord, what would you have me to do?"

You and I can this year be a part of the greatest mission giving experience in the history of mankind. We can make a difference. We can see to it that those missionaries who are waiting are finally able to go. We can help put some of the missionaries back in place that may have had to come home because of a shortfall of finances but could be reassigned to go because of the generosity and committed sacrifice of Southern Baptists. You can do your part and then encourage others to join in and help you. Lottie lived, loved, and gave, and so can we.

The author can be contacted at [directions@mbpcb.org](mailto:directions@mbpcb.org).

## Just for the Record



**NEW PROSPECT CHURCH, LINCOLN COUNTY,** celebrated pastor Willie Welch's 20th anniversary at the church Aug. 16.



**EAST MOSS POINT CHURCH, MOSS POINT,** held a deacon ordination service for Curtis Miller Nov. 22. Shown are his wife Christine, Miller, and pastor David Abbott.



**SHILOH CHURCH, BIG CREEK,** received a 5X8 foot American flag from the Calhoun Chapter of Woodmen of Life Oct. 4. Shown are Dwight Brown, chapter president, David Magness, and pastor Mark Longino.



**ZION HILL CHURCH, WESSON,** held a note burning Oct. 25. Shown are Jimmy Wooten, Wayne McKenzie, and pastor Tom McCormick.

### In other Church News:

➤ The Richton Bell Ringers will be in concert at **West Salem Church, Richton,** Dec. 9, 7 p.m.

➤ **First Church, Morton,** will present *Come and Behold Him* Dec. 6, 6 p.m.

➤ **First Church, Madison's,** women's ministry will present *Unwrapping the Gift of Christmas* Dec. 8, 6:30 p.m., featuring products from local merchants and appetizer samples. Frances Drost, speaker. Tickets, \$10, available at the door or online at [www.fbcmadison.org](http://www.fbcmadison.org).

➤ **Double Springs Church, Maben,** will host Debra Perry and Jaidyn's Call in worship Dec. 6, 11 a.m.

➤ **Algoma Church, Algoma,** is presenting its 24th annual drive-thru Nativity Dec. 4-5, 6-9 p.m. The display shows five well-known scenes portraying the story of the birth of Jesus.

➤ **Academy Church, Blue Mountain,** will host the Tribute Quartet and the Unity 4 Quartet in concert Dec. 4, 7 p.m. Love offering.

➤ **CLARIFICATION:** The Nov. 12, 2015, issue of *The Baptist Record* featured an article and photograph from **First Church, Vicksburg.** Carolyn Mendrop was shown presenting keys to a golf cart to pastor Matt Buckles. The golf cart is to be used as a security cart at the church.



What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

# HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

December 3, 2015

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

## Mark your calendar! Church Music Dept. 2016 Dates

*Mississippi Baptist  
All State Youth Choir & Orchestra  
Rehearsal Camp & Tour dates*

**June 6 - June 13**

Contact the Church Music Department  
at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board at  
susanci@bellsouth.net or 601-292-3267  
www.mbc.org



*HeartSong, Music & Worship Arts Camp  
For 6th - 12th Graders (2015-16 Year)*

**June 21 - June 25**

For more information visit [mbcb.org](http://mbcb.org)  
or contact the Church Music Department  
at susanci@bellsouth.net or 601-292-3267  
Preview DVD Available

### 2016 AREA KEYBOARD FESTIVALS

For more information  
contact Wyndy South,  
Church Music Dept.  
wsouth@mbcb.org.

#### Thursday, January 28, 2016 | 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Area 2	Calvary BC, 501 W. Main St., Tupelo, 38804	Doug Spires	C-662-842-3338
Area 2	FBC, 106 E. Lampkin St., Starkville, 39759	Tom Jenkins	C-662-323-5633
Area 3	FBC, 431 N. State St., Jackson, 39201	Wyndy South	O-601-292-3272 O-1-800-748-1651
Area 4	Poplar Springs Dr. BC, 4032 Poplar Springs Dr., Meridian, 39305	Michael Gibson	C-601-485-5106
Area 5	Carterville BC, 11125 Carterville Rd., Petal, 39465	Kristopher Smith	C-601-584-9457
Area 5	FBC, Columbia, 900 High School Ave., Columbia, 39429	Hugh Plunkett	C-601-736-2608
Area 5	FBC, 902 Live Oak Ave., Pascagoula, 39567	John White	C-228-762-2343
Area 5	FBC, 607 W. 5th St., Laurel, 39442	Marilyn Huff	H-601-763-8731

#### Friday, January 29, 2016 | 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Area 1	Longview Heights BC, 4501 Goodman Rd., Olive Branch, 38654	Blake Krumalis	Cell-662-404-3069
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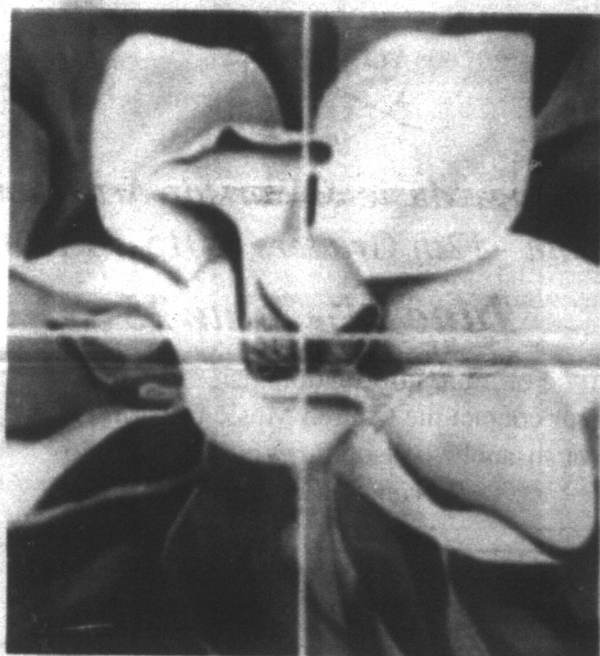
#### Saturday, January 30, 2016 | 9:30 a.m. - noon

Area 1	Emmanuel BC, 245 Meadowbrook Rd., Grenada, 38901	Barry Worrell	C-662-226-5316
Area 1	North Greenwood BC, 615 Grand Blvd., Greenwood, 38930	Patricia Ethridge	C-662-453-2801

CMD packet includes plans for Children's Ministry Day 2016 and provides colorful posters, a booklet containing decorating tips, ideas for a kickoff party, a recognition event, and learning activities. Visit WMU Web site for Promotion Packet ([www.wmystore.com](http://www.wmystore.com))

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Contact Tammy Anderson (WMU) at [tanderson@mbcb.org](mailto:tanderson@mbcb.org) or 601-292-3323 for more details



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Margaret Lackey  
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# IGNITE

**March 4-5, 2016**

**Garaywa Camp & Conference Center**

**IGNITE is a missions weekend for ALL girls  
7th - 12th grades and their leaders.**  
(Formerly known as the Mississippi Actives Convention or MAC)

**IGNITE will allow participants to experience:**

- Missionary Speakers
- Praise and Worship
- Breakout Sessions
- Mission Projects
- Fellowship with other girls

**Cost: \$12.50 program fee**  
plus, Garaywa meals & lodging

**Schedule:** Friday: 5:30 p.m. Check-in  
6:30 p.m. Dinner  
7:30 p.m. Worship

Saturday: 7:45 a.m. Breakfast  
12:15 p.m. Lunch  
5:00 p.m. Dismiss

**DEADLINE to REGISTER**  
**February 19, 2016**

Visit our Convention Web site for Registration details: [www.mbc.org/](http://www.mbc.org/) (Select Events and search by date) or Contact Julie Roberts (WMU) at [jroberts@mbcb.org](mailto:jroberts@mbcb.org) or 601-292-3317

## 2016 MISSIONARY MOMENTS

Prayer Guide and Offertory Statements

Contact Lisa Leavell at [lleavell@mbcb.org](mailto:lleavell@mbcb.org) or 601-292-3347 or visit [mbcb.org/what-is-cp/cp-resources](http://mbcb.org/what-is-cp/cp-resources) for your copy.



Stewardship/CP Department



# 2016

STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

JANUARY 31 - FEBRUARY 1

WHEELER GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH  
CORINTH, MS

*"...the fields are white already to harvest!"*  
john 4:35



BOB  
PITMAN



HERB  
REAVIS



JIM  
FUTRAL



JUNIOR  
HILL



KARA  
BLACKARD  
(HOST CHURCH PASTOR)



PHIL  
HOSKINS



SAMMY  
GILBREATH



BOB  
SMITH

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JIM FUTRAL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TREASURER  
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AND CHAIRMAN OF THE EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT

## 2016 SUMMER CAMPS

### Children's Mission Camp

Cost \$120  
Three Day Camp:  
June 30 - July 2  
July 11 - 13  
July 14 - 16  
July 25 - 27  
July 28 - 30

Cost \$150  
Four Day Camp:  
July 6 - 9

### Summer Mission Camp for Boys

Cost \$175  
July 18 - 22

### Lad/Dad Weekend

Cost \$42.50  
July 22 - 23

### Last Chance Camp

August 1 - 3

### Kid's Camp

June 20 - 22  
June 23 - 25  
June 27 - 29

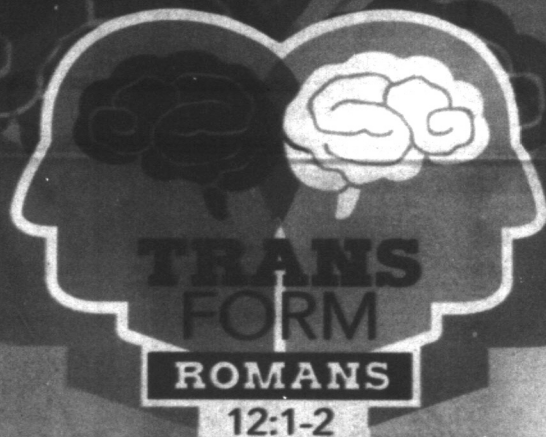
Questions:  
MS Kid's Camps contact:  
Jo Wesson, 601-292-3216  
jwesson@mbcb.org

### Connect Camp

June 6 - 9  
June 9 - 12  
June 14 - 17

Questions:  
Connect Camps contact:  
Rene Edwards, 601-292-3293  
redwards@mbcb.org

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Shane Thrash, camp manager | shanethrash@mbcb.org



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## YEC 2015

YOUTH EVANGELISM CHALLENGE

December 28-29, 2015  
Mississippi College

Registration Begins:

Challenge Concludes:



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BARNARD



GARY  
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Pray this day for...

December 4 - December 31, 2015

*"praying at all times in the Spirit...To that end keep alert with perseverance, making supplication for all the saints..."*

*Ephesians 6:18 (ESV)*

Pray for: **Guy De Mars**, missionary ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Cindy Demars**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Thomas & Kerri Dewett**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Alvin & Mary Doyle**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through member care.

Pray for: **Aaron & Tiffany Epps**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Richard & Wanda Clark**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through strategy coordination.

Pray for: **Rebecca Clark**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through youth evangelism.

Pray for: **David & Gloria Glaze**, missionaries ministering to media promotion & consultation Deaf Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Frank & Phoebe Harrison**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples.

Pray for: **Kenneth & Kimberly Hathcock**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church/home outreach & student evangelism.

Pray for: **Thomas & Bonnie Heaton**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through medicine & church/home outreach and evangelism.

Pray for: **Raymond & Cynthia Hodgins**, missionaries ministering to Deaf Peoples through church/home outreach & sports evangelism.

Pray for: **Jeffery & Lissa Holoman**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through strategy coordination.

Pray for: **Janet Halloway**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through student evangelism.

Pray for: **Ronald & Beverly Holmes**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church/home outreach, evangelism & church planting.

Pray for: **Daniel & Claudia Hood**, missionaries ministering to North African & Middle Eastern Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Millard Jones**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through student evangelism.

Pray for: **Susan Jones**, missionary ministering to East Asian Peoples through student evangelism.

Pray for: **John & Melinda Kyzer**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through personalizing church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Timothy & Rebecca Lightsey**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism and strategy coordination.

Pray for: **Asbury & Jeannie Martin**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Robert & Janice Mooney**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church/home outreach, evangelism & strategy coordination.

Pray for: **Stephen & Svetlana Parish**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism & strategy coordination.

Pray for: **Kevin & Brenda Peacock**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism & theological education.

Pray for: **John & Sarah Perkins**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through mission support, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Michael & Sarah Prewitt**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through personalizing church/home outreach & church planting.

The IMB missionaries listed in the HouseTops prayer calendar are currently active in 2-4 year terms or in career service.

*Merry Christmas!*

to pastors in the Baptist Convention of New York through the Suit Project ministry.

Every year we seek to bless pastors and their wives with gifts, sending pastors new suits and their wives gift cards. This ministry has been blessing ministers and their families since 1963. Join in making the holidays even more special for these ministers by giving to the suit project. Donations to this ministry can be a rewarding fundraising project for any group in your church: Royal Ambassadors, Gifts in Action, WMU, Men's Ministry, VBS, or youth.

To make donations, or for more information, contact the Men's Ministry Department of the MCB at 800-748-1651, Ext. 335, 601-292-3335, or e-mail [dvail@mbcb.org](mailto:dvail@mbcb.org).

2/02/07  
MISS ALESSIA WORTHY  
Charlie & Shannon Worthy  
European Peoples

2/16/01  
MR. HADDON BLEDSOE  
Parents: David & Laurie  
American Peoples

2/23/06  
MISS OLIVIA  
Parents: G & H  
Restricted

2/24/00  
MR. NATHAN PEACOCK  
Parents: Kevin & Brenda  
European Peoples

**Encourage an MK with a card!**

To be mailed from  
WMU 1/4/16

**PLEASE NOTE THE TIMING:** Thank you for your love and support of MKs by sending Birthday cards! Because of the sending to other countries, there is a need to get cards sent a month ahead of birthday. As soon as the list is in the Baptist Record, please send the cards and not wait until a couple of weeks before the date of the birthday. It is posted two months ahead to give time to receive cards and then to mail them a month ahead of time to insure arrival around birthday. Again, thank you for being a blessing to so many with this ministry!

BAPTISTS

**NOTE:** Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to the WMU. Individual cards do not need postage stamps when sent as a package to MS WMU.  
**FOR SECURITY,** cards will be forwarded. Please send all to: MCB WMU MK Birthdays, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205.  
Please include your return address on each card envelope. MKs and their parents may wish to send you an update or note of appreciation.

**HOUSE TOPS**



# BIBL iO C i P H E R

TFP MBQF OBQNQ OBCFAN WQACF

OZ SZEQ OZ GTNN, OBQF DZZY LG,

TFP DCRO LG UZLV BQTPN; RZV UZLV

VQPQEGOCZF PVTMQOB FCAB.

DLYQ OMQFOU-ZFQ: OMQFOU-QCABO

Clue: M = W

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John 13:34

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

## MS POSITIONS

**WE ARE SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR.** Please send resumes to: enonbaptistchurch@outlook.com or mail them to Enon Baptist Church, 2604 Carrollton Rd Grenada, MS 38901 attn: Laura Cook.

**UNION BAPTIST CHURCH, WALTHAM COUNTY IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME PASTOR.** Please mail resume to Union Baptist Church, ATTN: Pastor Search Committee, 345 Hwy 27N Tylerstown MS 39667.

**FBC MENDENHALL IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC.** Please send resume to PO Box 366 Mendenhall, MS 39114 or email to: swanmen@fbcmenndehall.org

**COPIAH COUNTY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION SEEKING PART-TIME ASSOCIATION MISSION DIRECTOR.** Please send Resumes to: Mr. Larry Papizan, Copiah County Baptist Association, P.O. Box 230, Hazlehurst MS 39083.

**MORRISON CHAPEL BC IN CLEVELAND MS IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR.** Please send resumes to: George Barefoot, 1612 Deering St. Cleveland MS 38732 or barefoot1016@hotmail.com. For more information call 662-719-5445.

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF ELLISVILLE IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME YOUTH MINISTER.** Send resumes to First Baptist Church, attention: John Howard Robertson/Search Committee, 302 E Holly St., Ellisville, MS 39437 or email: efbcyouthmin@gmail.com.

**NEEDED: FULL-TIME OR BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN AT ASHLAND BAPTIST CHURCH IN ASHLAND, MS.** Send resumes to Mr. Stanley Poff, P.O. Box 35, Ashland, MS 38603 or email to stanleypoff@yahoo.com

## CLASSIFIEDS

**FOR SALE:** Mason Hamblin Baby Grand Piano, model A, 5 foot, mahogany finish, has not been rebuilt, restored or repaired. One owner, purchased new in 1976, in excellent condition, \$10,500.00. Brandon, MS 601-573-1325.

**SEEKING: FULL-TIME MUSIC AND WORSHIP PASTOR AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MURRAY, KY.** Contact Rhonda Roberts at First Baptist Church, 203 South 4th Street, Murray, KY 42071.

**PULPIT SUPPLY AVAILABLE:** Retired Southern Baptist Navy chaplain available for Sunday pulpit supply on short notice (pastor illness, vacation, rest, etc.). 100 mile radius of Hattiesburg. Member of Hardy Street Baptist Church. Graduate of New Orleans Baptist and Fuller Theological Seminaries. References available. Compensation unimportant. Contact Dr. Benny J. Hornsby at 601-408-4606 or villefranche60@yahoo.com

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# Pro-lifers decry Colorado Springs clinic shootings

**COLORADO SPRINGS (BP and local reports)** — Pro-life leaders condemned the deadly shooting spree on Nov. 27 at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs while expressing grief and concern for the victims and their survivors.

The opposition by leading pro-life advocates came in response to the shooting deaths of three people and injuries to nine others. Robert Lewis Dear Jr., 57, surrendered to police at the clinic after a five-hour standoff.



DEAR

Killed at the clinic were Garrett Swasey, 44, a police officer, father of two children, and elder at an evangelical church; Jennifer Markovsky, 35, a stay-at-home mother of two; and Ke'Arre Stewart 29, an Iraq War veteran and father of two.

Swasey responded in the line of duty. Markovsky and Stewart had accompanied friends to the clinic. The Denver Post reported. None of the 15 clinic workers at the scene during the shooting spree were harmed. Planned Parenthood officials said, according to The Colorado Springs Gazette.

While law enforcement authorities refused to comment on Dear's motive, four words

attributed to him by news media prompted Planned Parenthood to charge opposition to abortion provoked the violence. Dear's remarks to police after surrendering included "no more baby parts," according to multiple news outlets, but authorities would not confirm he made such a statement, The Gazette reported.

Baptist leaders and others with the country's top pro-life organizations decried the violence and rejected any notion Dear acted as a pro-lifer.

Mike Routt, a Colorado Springs pastor and president of the state's Baptist convention, condemned the violence as a "senseless act of violence in which three of our citizens were killed." Routt, pastor of Circle Drive Church, is also chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee.

Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville, noted, "Vigilante violence against abortion clinics is not the way that Christians are called to stand for justice."

Charmaine Yoest, president of Americans United for Life, said in a written statement, "We are heartbroken for the families grieving the loss of their loved ones, especially during this time that is supposed to be one of national Thanksgiving and family celebration. We categorically condemn this violence. While we don't know all

the details of this horrific event, we know that it was an evil act, one condemned by pro-life Americans nationwide."

Dear was not known to pro-lifers who gather for prayer outside the Planned Parenthood clinic two days a week, a participant in the peaceful actions told The Gazette. News reports indicated he was from North Carolina, where he lived in a ramshackle house before moving to a travel trailer outside Colorado Springs.

The "no more baby parts" comment attributed to Dear, if true, would appear to be connected to recent revelations of Planned Parenthood's trade in baby body parts. Undercover videos released the last five months by the Center for Medical Progress have shown various Planned Parenthood officials in different locations discussing the sale of organs from aborted children. The videos include acknowledgements by Planned Parenthood employees of their willingness to manipulate the abortion procedure to preserve body parts for sale and use.

Swasey, a six-year veteran of the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs police force, responded to the shootings in support of Colorado Springs officers. He was one of four elders at Hope Chapel, overseeing the church's care groups and serving as part of its team of teachers.

## College News

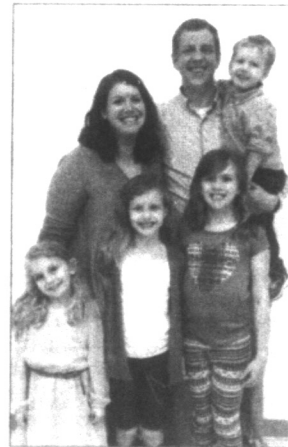


Award recipients in the Miss **WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY** 2016 Pageant are (from left) Madison Peyton of Hattiesburg, Miss WCU 2016; Hattie Zukas of Phoenix, Arizona, first runner-up; Jamie Davis of Wiggins, second runner-up; and Macy Monk of Denham Springs, Louisiana, third runner-up and winner of the Virginia Scott Spirit Award.

### In other College News:

► A guide for students seeking an online education recently ranked **William Carey University** as a "Best Online College" in Mississippi. OnlineColleges.net ranked Carey third out of nine schools on the top online schools list. More than 30 colleges and universities offering online programs in the state were considered in the rankings, which factor in tuition and retention rates, accreditation status and program options. The rankings use data from the National Center for Education Statistics, the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education.

## Staff Changes



**FIRST CHURCH, OLOH, SUMRALL**, has called Andrew Hunter as associate pastor of worship and Victoria Hunter as director of children's ministries.

## LOTTIE

cont. from p. 1

time, Donald can see the person "listening to the power" of God's Word, curious to know more. By the look on a man's face, "I know this guy's never heard this in his life. ...He has no idea how the story ends."

Donald, in contrast, started preaching when he was 14 at the church where his father was pastor, Calvary Church in Pensacola, Fl. After serving as a pastor in Mississippi for nearly 17 years, Donald returned to Calvary Church to serve as pastor for four years before joining Mid-America Seminary's New York faculty.

He has used his pastoral experience and theological education to train South Asian church leaders how to share their testimonies and simple Gospel messages, as well as how to form house churches and how to lead worship services and Bible studies in that setting.

### The cost

The leaders are hungry "to grow and to know and to learn," said Donald, despite what it has cost them. A former Hindu turned minister was told by his family, "You can either get rid of Jesus, or we're going to get rid of you," Donald noted. "I have to serve Christ," Donald said the man told his family, who kicked him out of the house.

"They closed his room and said, 'Don't come back. You're not welcome in this house anymore,'" Donald said. "If you're hungry, we don't intend to feed you. Don't call us if you're sick, we won't take care of you. As far as we're concerned, you don't exist anymore."



**YOUNG BELIEVERS** — Donald McKinney (far right - not his real name) listens to children sing during a house church gathering in a small village in South Asia. Thanks to the giving of Southern Baptists to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, the former Mississippian was able to be there to help train the pastor in church planting. (BP photo)

"What you give to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering helped me to help him. He told me, 'What you teach me every month, I go home and I preach to all my churches, and I come back and I learn some more.' Thanks for helping him. It really matters."

**Donald McKinney**

**IMB missionary**

The pastor now goes village to village, preaching to a wide circle of 16 house churches. "What you give to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering helped me to help him," Donald said. "He told me, 'What you teach me every month, I go home and I preach to all my churches, and I come back and I learn some more.' Thanks for helping him. It really matters."

"I see my brothers (in Christ) who are faithfully, steadily wit-

nessing, seeing people saved, baptizing them, and starting new churches," Donald said. "I'm encouraged by the work of the Lord in the churches, by the work of the Holy Spirit to raise up young leaders, and I see many of them coming forward to do the work of the ministry."

*Editor's note: Find resources for churches at [imb.org](http://imb.org) to learn more about and promote the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.*

### Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electroni-

cally via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: [baptistrecord@mbcb.org](mailto:baptistrecord@mbcb.org).

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## Need a light?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



# The Way Prepared • Matthew 3:1-12

Good News from the Gospel of Matthew "And she [Mary] will bring forth a Son, and you [Joseph] shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins," Matthew 1:21 (NKJV). What a tremendous truth for all time. I sit at the computer on my Kitchen table in central Mississippi typing these words November 14, 2015. I'm reminded anew that Jesus is the savior of His people of whom I am one and so are most of you reading this.

In case you haven't caught the November 14th date yet, the Fox News app on my iPhone right now says the confirmed death toll in Paris is 127 and more than 180 seriously wounded with many others still unaccounted for. The French President says this is an act of war.

Matthew's Good News is timely, well worthy of our study over the next months. It ties together the Old and New Testaments referring often to Old Testament prophecies being fulfilled by Jesus. The third chapter that we study today tells us about John the Baptist's ministry preparing the way for Jesus.

It is an understatement that John is an interesting figure in history. John was a cousin of Jesus and knew of him before the baptism that is central to Matthew 3. "Now John himself was clothed in camel's hair,

with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey," Matthew 3:4 (NKJV). To understand the biblical explanation of John's place in preparing the way for God's Son you need to reread the first chapter of Luke. A couple of points from Luke's discussion:

Luke 1:15 "For he [John the Baptist] will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink, he will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb." (NKJV)

Luke 1:41 "And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit." (NKJV)

John was preaching in the wilderness, "Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near!" Matthew 3:2 (HCSB). Matthew does not want us to miss that John is fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah 40:3 "A Voice of one calling: 'In the desert prepare

the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.'" (HCSB) Today we must realize that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand and God is on His throne.

John was obviously a very forceful preacher and "Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan,

confessing their sins," Matthew 3:5-6. John's baptism was not Christian baptism but only washing away sin which is very consistent with Old Testament Jewish tradition. John forcefully and fearlessly insisted on true meaningful repentance.

When the Jewish religious leaders came out into the desert to check out this threat to their total control, John faced them head on. These Pharisees and Sadducees came out in insincerity, certainly not to understand his message of repentance. They were totally convinced that they did not need to repent.

John looked straight into their hate filled eyes and said: [you] "Brood of vipers! Who put it into your minds to flee from the coming wrath?" [William Barclay's translation in The Daily Study Bible] John's greeting of these proud religious leaders as a bunch of snakes was not well received. They later took great pleasure in the beheading of John the Baptist. We must realize forceful preaching of repentance or condemning sin takes great courage.

John's courageous preaching continued that day in verses 8 through 10. Matthew quoted John saying to those proud religious leaders: "and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones," Matthew 3:9 (NKJV).

The heart of John's message is in verse 11: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire," Matthew 3:11 (NKJV).

God spoke from heaven to approve Jesus after his baptism saying: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!" Matthew 3:17 (NKJV).

Hicks is associational missions director for Jasper Association in Bay Springs.



Explore the Bible  
with Don Hicks

# Adopted into God's Family • 1 John 3:1-10

Identity: it's a seemingly simple concept, but one that has far-reaching effects. There are hosts of ways that we define ourselves, from hobbies, to talents, to family, to past experiences. Regardless of where we find our identities, those things often profoundly shape our views and affect the way we live.

For many, it is easy to focus on our failures and our struggles and to view ourselves as being defined by those things. However, Scripture tells us something different. If we are Christ-followers, then we have been given a new identity. We are no longer "dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked," but because of God's great mercy and love, He "made us alive together with Christ." (Ephesians 2:1-2, 5 ESV)

Perhaps one of the most powerful concepts that we see in regards to our new identity is that we have been made children of God. In the book of 1 John, John wrote to a group of believers who were surrounded by false teachings. As he reminded them of Truth and instructed them in how to live as believers, he made a point to tell them in 1 John 3:1, "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are (ESV)."

Pause here for a moment. Rather than gloss over this as a familiar idea, take a moment to dwell on the magnitude of such a statement. We, who on our own are broken, sinful, wicked people, enemies of God, unable to do good apart from his grace, have been adopted as children of the Most High God. We are co-heirs with Christ. We who were once far off have been brought near. "But God shows his love for us in that while

we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8, ESV) This kind of love is beyond full comprehension. As a father loves his child more than he ever thought possible, even more so does the Perfect God love his children. In this love we put our faith, we find our hope, we rest, we cling.

This new identity is not a reason to puff up with pride. Our salvation, Paul tells us in Ephesians 2, is not something

that we have earned or deserve, but is a gift from God. The result of this gift should be good works. While our good works do not earn our salvation, they are supposed to flow from it. In Ephesians 5:1, Paul commands us to imitate God as beloved children. As a child imitates his parents, so we as adopted children are to imitate our heavenly Father.

As children of God, we are called to live differently than the world. We are now children of the light, free from the power of sin, able to live lives that produce good

fruit. In Christ there is no sin, and he appeared to take away sin and destroy the works of the devil. How then can we, his followers, abide in him and yet continue to make a practice of sinning? John tells us that it cannot be so. He explicitly says in 1 John 3:9, "No one born of God makes a

practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God (ESV). While we may not be perfect in this life, we strive to live righteously, clinging to the sure hope that we have in Christ and relying on his power. We are children of God. Are our lives reflecting that?

In the Gospels, we see Christ's life characterized by obedience to the Father. Repeatedly throughout scripture we are told that obedience to God is directly tied to love—loving both God and others. In fact, Jesus himself said that loving God and loving others are the two greatest commandments. To imitate our Father requires living a life of love, because God is love and has shown us the greatest love through Jesus. What are some ways that you can better reflect the love of God?

Where do you find your identity? If you have chosen to follow Jesus, your identity is "child of God." It is out of this identity that we live. As his child, you are able and called to live a life of righteousness, turning from sin and walking in love.

Wooten is a member of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton.



Bible Studies for Life  
with Breanna Wooten



## OBITUARIES

**Eddie Leon Ruddick**, 86, died November 13 at his family home in Stanton, AL. He was born in Alabama on January 29, 1929. He graduated from Auburn University in 1949 and New Orleans Seminary in 1954. He pastored a number of churches in Alabama before returning to New Orleans Seminary for his Ph.D. in Old Testament theology. After that, he served as pastor of Trinity Church, Biloxi, and another church in Alabama before he was called in 1981 to be head of Old Testament studies at Clarke College in Newton. He served there until the school, a two-year institution of the

Mississippi Baptist Convention, closed in 1993. During his time at Clarke College, he also pastored State Boulevard Church, Meridian, and Meehan Church, Meehan. Ruddick is survived by his sister Peggy; daughters Deborah Blais and Leigh Tolton; five grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

**L. Parkes Marler**, 93, lifelong Baptist pastor and missionary, died Nov. 14 at the State Veterans Home in Kosciusko. He was born June 4, 1922, in Harpersville, and served in the U.S. Army during WWII as an amphibious engineer and chaplain's assistant. He received a bachelor's degree from



MARLER

Mississippi College in Clinton and a master's degree in theology in 1953 from New Orleans Seminary. After pastoring in Mississippi from 1947-55, the Marlers were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board, now the International Mission Board (IMB), of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1955. They served in South Korea (1956-68), Guam (1968-82), and Greece (1982-86). Following retirement, Marler was interim pastor at many churches in Scott, Smith, Leake, and Newton counties. He was preceded in death by his parents, William Driscoll Marler and Annie Mae Marler; two brothers, five half-brothers, and a sister. He is sur-

vived by his wife of 69 years, Martha Ellen Townsend Marler of Harpersville; daughter Gloria M. Glaze of Brandon; sons Marcus P. Marler of Jackson, Thomas E. Marler of Guam, Philip W. Marler of Carthage; nine grandchildren; ten great-grandchildren; a brother; and four sisters. Funeral services for Marler were held Nov. 19 at Harpersville Church, Harpersville, with burial following in Harpersville Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, IMB Office of Finance, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230-0767. Online contributions can be made at netcommunity.imb.org/Donation/imbo/LMCO. Colonial Chapel Funeral Home in Forest was in charge of the arrangements.

# Women doubt church's response to crisis pregnancies

**NASHVILLE (BP)** — Many women with unplanned pregnancies go silently from the church pew to the abortion clinic convinced the church would gossip rather than help, according to a study released Nov. 23 by LifeWay Research.

More than four in 10 American women who have had an abortion were churchgoers when they ended a pregnancy, researchers found in a survey sponsored by Care Net, a non-

profit organization supporting more than 1,100 pregnancy centers across North America. The study features data from a survey conducted May 6-13.

Only seven percent of women discussed their abortion decision with anyone at church. Seventy-six percent say the church had no influence on their decision to terminate a pregnancy.

"That's a huge opportunity for the church to have an impact on those decisions," said

Scott McConnell, vice president of LifeWay Research, an evangelical research division of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville that specializes in surveys about faith in culture and matters that affect the church.

The study results point to a church culture that often lacks grace, McConnell said. Among women who have had an abortion:

- Sixty-five percent say church members judge single women who are pregnant.

- Fifty-four percent think churches oversimplify decisions about pregnancy options.

- Forty-one percent believe churches are prepared to help with decisions about unwanted pregnancies.

- Only three in 10 think churches give accurate advice about pregnancy options.

"Women are perceiving judgment from the church, and that's probably partly because there are clear teachings in the Bible including about how and why we make judgments," McConnell said. "However, if they don't start experiencing something different than what they've seen in the past, these numbers aren't going to change."

## Connected

The church has connections with many women who choose abortion, Care Net and LifeWay Research found. In the survey of 1,038 women who have had abortions, 70% claim a Christian religious preference, and 43% report attending church monthly or more at the time of an abortion.

Distrust of the church's response is widespread, the survey shows. Sixty-four percent believe church members are more likely to gossip about a woman considering abortion than to help her understand options. When weighing an abortion decision, women say they expected or experienced judgment (33%) or condemnation (26%) from a church far more than caring (16%) or helpfulness (14%).

Judgmental attitudes among even a few people in a church can discourage women from seeking help, McConnell said. "They'll perceive everybody feels that way." Only 38% of women who have had an abortion consider church a safe place to discuss pregnancy options including parenting, adoption and abortion.

While 25% say they would recommend a friend or family member discuss an unplanned pregnancy with someone at church, another fifty-four percent say they would not recommend it.

## Culture of silence

Women keep silent in church both before and after ending a pregnancy, the study found. Fifty-two percent of churchgoers who have had an abortion say no one at church knows it. Forty-

Among women who had an abortion:

**Which of these was most influential on your decision to terminate the pregnancy?**

Father of the baby	38%
Medical professional	26%
My mother	14%
Friend(s)	8%
Abortion provider	5%
Other family member	3%
Counselor	2%
My father	2%
Someone at a local church	1%
A pregnancy center worker	<1%
Other	1%

"While much work needs to be done to equip the church to help women and men with their pregnancy decisions, there are positive signs that many churches will be receptive to efforts to implement programming that addresses this need."

**Roland C. Warren**

president and CEO of Care Net

nine percent say pastors' teachings on forgiveness don't seem to apply to terminated pregnancies.

"That tells you the environment of the church," McConnell said. "You can't say you've had an abortion, you can't say you're considering one. It's completely taboo to discuss but when a woman is willing to publicly acknowledge she's had an abortion in the past, she will sometimes be approached by several other women in the church who've never been willing to share with anybody that they too have had an abortion," he said. "It's incredibly freeing for them."

## Impact of church commitment

Even among regular churchgoers, 52% of women who had abortions say the church had no influence on their decision. However, women attending church at least once a month were more likely to discuss their abortion decision with someone at church (16%) than those who rarely or never attend (two percent).

Regular churchgoers who had an abortion are also much more

likely than those who rarely or never attend to say they anticipated or experienced positive church responses such as caring (31% vs. seven percent), helpfulness (28% vs. seven percent), and love (25% vs. six percent).

"While much work needs to be done to equip the church to help women and men with their pregnancy decisions, there are positive signs that many churches will be receptive to efforts to implement programming that addresses this need," said Roland C. Warren, president and CEO of Care Net.

"The survey shows that frequent churchgoers — people who know the church best — were significantly more likely to believe the church is prepared to provide loving, compassionate support for those considering abortion, especially those attending evangelical churches," Warren said.

Supportive responses from the church are key, McConnell said. "For most women with an unwanted pregnancy, if nobody is willing to say, 'We're going to help you through this,' it's hard for them to rationally say they should keep the child."

Among women who have had an abortion:

**76%**

say the church had no influence on their decision to terminate a pregnancy

**64%**

believe church members are more likely to gossip about a woman considering abortion than to help her understand options

**54%**

would not recommend a friend or family member discuss an unplanned pregnancy at church

**52%**

of churchgoers who have had an abortion say no one at church knows it

**43%**

were churchgoers when they ended a pregnancy

**41%**

think churches are prepared to help women with decisions about unplanned pregnancies

**30%**

believe churches give accurate information about pregnancy options

**7%**

discussed abortion decision with someone at church

## Methodology

A demographically balanced online panel was used for interviewing American women from May 6-13, 2015. Quotas and slight weights were used to ensure the sample matched national totals for ethnicity, age, income, and region. This nationally balanced sample was screened to include only those women who indicated they had ever had a pregnancy termination/abortion medical procedure. The completed sample is 1,038 surveys.